

VZCZCXRO1672
RR RUEHLMC
DE RUEHTO #0177/01 0550826
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 240826Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1327
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0632
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 000177

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2020
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [KCOR](#) [SNAR](#) [MZ](#)
SUBJECT: VIOLENCE AND CRIME ON THE RISE

REF: A. 08 MAPUTO 1286
[1](#)B. 06 MAPUTO 1209

Classified By: Ambassador Leslie V. Rowe for reasons 1.4(b+d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Following relatively peaceful national elections and the inauguration of President Armando Guebuza's second five-year term, a series of violent acts has raised serious security concerns in Mozambique. Within a 72-hour period two police agents were ambushed and murdered in the capital city, in scenes reminiscent of a series of assassinations of police officers in late 2006 and 2008 (reftels). In the same period of time, the Angolan Embassy was assaulted and at least one employee injured, a newspaper editor was beaten and stabbed, and several kidnappings were reported, including the 12-year old daughter of a prominent businessman. Her father chose not to involve the police and paid a ransom of \$400,000 for her safe return. On February 17 in broad daylight in downtown Maputo, criminals robbed a major bank, carried out a carjacking, and were engaged in a running gun battle with police, injuring several innocent bystanders. These incidents underscore a weak rule of law in Mozambique, with many ordinary citizens making the calculation that if the police cannot protect their own, they must act independently. Interior Minister Pacheco has failed in his five-year attempt to clean up the police force. END SUMMARY.

TWO POLICE AGENTS AMBUSHED AND MURDERED

[1](#)2. (C) On February 13, Criminal Investigation Police (PIC) agent Arsenio Mousse was killed in the middle class residential Alto Mae neighborhood of Maputo. After first immobilizing the agent's vehicle by shooting the tires, an unknown number of assailants fired upon and killed him. Less than 48 hours later at approximately 15:00 on February 15 in the upscale Marginal area of the city, PIC officer Ricardo Mondlane Junior was executed mob-style. Mondlane had received a phone tip requesting a private meeting in an area frequented by many for its bars and ocean views. According to an eyewitness report, three assailants leaped from a van and emptied their AK-47s into Mondlane who was waiting in his vehicle. Both agents are members of PIC's intelligence unit, but the reason for their murder remains unclear. National police (PRM) spokesman Pedro Cossa reported that criminal gangs are believed to be responsible, but that the police have no leads. Oddly enough however, the police have not opened any investigations and appear to consider both cases closed. These incidents are reminiscent of a series of assassinations of police officers in 2006 and 2008 (reftels) which many observers believed were the result of organized crime settling scores with corrupt policemen. In the past, such incidents were alternatively believed to be attempts by the police to clean house; however, the motive is not clear

in these recent killings. (NOTE: Embassy contacts claim that the going rate for a professional assassination is about \$2,000 in Maputo. END NOTE)

ANGOLAN EMBASSY ASSAULTED; EDITOR STABBED

13. (SBU) The daily newspaper Bantu reported on February 15 that the Angolan Embassy was subjected to armed attack and one person had been killed. Emboff contacted that embassy's diplomatic security chief who confirmed the attack and that one employee had been assaulted. On the same day Bantu reported that its chief newsroom editor, Fabio Mondlane Junior (NOTE: No relation to PIC agent Mondlane. END NOTE), had been beaten and stabbed while in Maputo's lawless and virtually ungoverned Mafalala neighborhood on personal business. PRM officials are known to avoid Mafalala at night for fear of their own safety, and gun battles between police and criminals in this area are relatively frequent occurrences. On February 17 at 11:30 am in downtown Maputo, criminals robbed a major bank, carried out a carjacking, and were engaged in a running gun battle with police, injuring several innocent bystanders. The criminals escaped.

A WAVE OF KIDNAPPING

14. (SBU) PRM Chief Jorge Khalau was quoted on February 15 in the daily journal MediaFax as saying "It is true that

MAPUTO 00000177 002 OF 002

there is a wave of kidnapping, but we are trying to get to the bottom of all this." In the Maputo suburb of Matola, two siblings were taken while returning home from school and returned after payment of 115,000 meticaís (approximately \$3,800). Widely reported in the media was the kidnapping in Nampula of 12-year old Nahir, the daughter of Abdul Latifo. Police believe that her driver may be involved, but have not been able to locate him. The father paid a ransom of \$400,000 and decided not to involve the PRM. The internet daily Expresso described citizens of Nampula Province's two leading cities, Nampula and Nacala, as extremely concerned about the boldness of the kidnappers and the local police's apparent apathy, with one commentator complimenting Latifo's decision not to rely on the police.

COMMENT: IF THE POLICE CANNOT EVEN
PROTECT THEMSELVES ...

15. (C) It is unclear whether PRM Chief Khalau is correct in characterizing the latest kidnappings as a "wave" or whether these criminal acts are a temporary phenomenon, since the PRM does not keep reliable crime statistics. But there is ample cause for concern, and these recent incidents, particularly the assassinations of police officers, follow similar trends from 2006 and 2008. When Interior Minister Jose Pacheco took office in February 2005, he stated publicly that one of his top priorities would be to clean up the police force. By all accounts, Pacheco has failed, with the PRM regarded as among the most corrupt institutions in a country dogged by what Transparency International describes as rampant corruption. The February 2009 African Peer Review Mechanism analysis warned that a widening chasm between rich and poor and growing social exclusion were creating a "serious risk" of societal conflict. In March 2009 Mozambique's Institute for the Promotion of Peace also pointed to worrying economic disparities. Long-time Mozambique watcher, and admittedly leftward-leaning, British academic Joseph Hanlon notes that despite massive foreign aid, there has been no peace dividend ending poverty or providing economic opportunity for ordinary citizens. Instead, Hanlon says a tiny group of powerful, politically

connected individuals seem to have reaped the rewards of donor largesse. While what Hanlon says may be partially true, some of these recent assassinations and kidnappings are likely linked to the illicit economy, particularly narco-trafficking and money laundering. As the illicit economy grows, and the rule of law weakens, allegations that Mozambique may become a narco-state appear more credible and Post's concerns about the country's internal security are increasing.

ROWE